

# Comprehensive Plan Process Floodplain Development Assumptions

*August 17, 2001*

## Overview and Purpose

The purpose of this task is to review the basic **ASSUMPTIONS** intended for use by the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) in defining how development in floodways and 100 year floodplains is to be described in future land use alternatives prepared as part of the current Comprehensive Plan process.

In other words, what general types and amounts of development should be **assumed to remain** and what new development occur within the City and County 's floodways and floodplains as we begin the process of delineating future land uses in formulating a new City-County Comprehensive Plan?

The purpose of this immediate task is NOT to establish the final policy or policies that are to emerge from the forthcoming multi-month work effort of the Floodplain Task Force. Rather, the intent is to characterize the assumptions – NOT POLICIES – that should be employed in the present City-County Comprehensive Planning modeling and analysis process.

The land use plan alternative(s) created over the coming months as part of the comprehensive planning process will be used in several ways. First and foremost it (they) will be used in assessing various transportation network improvements.

The assumed land uses will be used to calculate assumed future travel demand (i.e., vehicle trips) occurring from and to major land use categories. These estimates will then serve to project the travel demand along each segment (i.e., roadway link) on a computer simulated street network. In turn, the results of this computer simulation will be employed to project desirable future roadway improvements for addressing improvements in the level of service for the traveling public.

The assumed land use may also serve in other technical venues to determine such future utility and public service demands such as water, wastewater, stormwater, schools, libraries and the similar community services.

The assumptions may also serve in assessing the policies use to determine the appropriate future location of industrial and commercial facilities. The assumed locational guidelines governing the siting of such facilities will be tied in part to the premises used concerning the future utilization of floodway and floodplain lands.

## **Modeling Assumptions for Comprehensive Plan Process:**

### **A. Existing Development within the Floodplain and Floodway**

- ☐ Significant amounts of industrial, commercial and residential development currently exist within the floodplain, particularly along Salt Creek through the older areas of Lincoln.
- ☐ Many of these areas were developed at a time when impacts to development from flood hazards and the affects of development upon the floodplain were not well recognized.
- ☐ These neighborhoods are an integral part of our community. Some of the older areas in the floodplain also are part of historic districts. There is a benefit to the community for residential neighborhoods and businesses in these areas maintain a good level of economic health.
- ☐ *For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan process, the following assumptions are recommended:*
  1. *Where there is existing commercial or industrial development in the floodplain, assume that these uses will continue and individual businesses may expand within floodplain areas.*
  2. *Where there is existing residential development in the floodplain, assume that this use will continue and that existing structures may be enlarged.*

### **B. Areas Within the Floodplain and Floodway and Designated for Open Space or Agricultural Land Uses in the Current Comprehensive Plan**

- ☐ Development in the floodplain can impact the flood storage and conveyance properties and other natural and beneficial functions of floodplains.
- ☐ The long-term, cumulative impact of development in the floodplain is to introduce new development to flood risks and to increase the flood hazard for existing development within and adjacent to floodplains.
- ☐ There is an opportunity to avoid introducing new development to flood risks and to preserve the important functions of floodplains by designating areas for future urban development outside of floodplain and floodway areas.
- ☐ Designating areas for development outside of floodplains and floodways would have the additional benefit of reducing the extension of public infrastructure to develop flood prone areas where future flood damages may occur.

- ☐ *For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan process, the following assumption is recommended:*

1. *Where the existing land use plan shows parks, open space or agricultural land uses within the floodplain and floodway, assume that those land uses continue in the future and that development occurs outside of the floodplain and floodway.*

### **C. Areas Within the Floodplain or Floodway that are Zoned or Planned for Industrial or Commercial Uses But are Currently Undeveloped**

- ☐ A notable amount of Lincoln's industrially zoned land is located in floodprone areas. A 1997 study of Lincoln's industrially zoned land revealed that about 4,251 acres (43 percent) of the total 9,817 acres are within the existing floodway and 100-year floodplain. It is estimated that there are an additional 1,110 acres of industrially zoned land shown in the present Comprehensive Plan but not yet zoned as industrial. It is likely that this land has a similar percentage split between those areas inside and outside the floodway and floodplain.
- ☐ Lincoln's inventory of industrially zoned land is the product of many years of public policy intended to place what are often considered less desirable uses in areas away from residential neighborhoods and other "more sensitive uses," and in locations having greater access to railroad facilities – the later uses often being located along stream beds where grades were less severe and land more readily available for such uses.
- ☐ These forces have left the community with significant amounts of land zoned for industrial and commercial uses that remain within mapped floodplain areas.
- ☐ It remains problematic to anticipate what the likely policy outcome will be from the Floodplain Task Force regarding the future of these areas. Similarly, owing to various scheduling demands, it is necessary to assume some manner of "floodplain policy" as the comprehensive plan process moves forward.
- ☐ As the Floodplain Task Force completes its work, other efforts are also underway or coming to a conclusion. For example, the Comprehensive Plan Committee continues its work to formulate a new City-County Comprehensive Plan. The present schedule calls for the preparation of a draft Plan document by the end of January, 2002. The Economic Futures Task Force – a subordinate group to the CPC that is looking at long term economic growth issues including industrial site needs – is winding down its study efforts. Their recommendations are anticipated to be released to the CPC by late August, 2001.

□ *For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan process, the following assumptions are recommended:*

- 1. Until such time as the work of the Floodplain Task Force can be completed, it seems reasonable at this time to assume that some industrial and commercial development may occur within those areas already zoned or planned for industrial or commercial and which are in the delineated floodplain.*
- 2. Where an area in the designated floodplain is zoned or planned for such development, assume that between 10 and 20 percent of the total assumed growth in new industrial or commercial uses will occur within such areas for purposes of conducting the present Comprehensive Plan activities. The final assumed allocation will be determined on the basis of the recommendations coming forth from the Economic Futures Task Force and the Comprehensive Plan Committee.*

The recommendations listed above are not intended to suggest a likely outcome from the work of the Floodplain Task Force; nor should they be assumed to reflect the most probable outcome from the Task Forces' deliberations. Rather, these assumptions are designed to reflect the best available knowledge at this time for the purpose of comprehensive plan modeling, and are subject to change, refine, and reconsideration.